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Le rapport traite de l'enseignement moral et religieux dans les communautés desservies par la Commission scolaire Crie. Il fournit une description générale de la situation d'enseignement et d'apprentissage, résume les points de vue des représentants de la communauté sur l'éducation morale et religieuse et suggère une direction générale à prendre pour développer ce programme.

Pour réaliser cette étude, les auteurs ont visité, en février 1980, les principales communautés Crie où ils rencontrèrent les comités d'école, les enseignants et les membres du clergé. Une personne de l'équipe de recherche eut l'occasion de discuter du programme de l'enseignement moral et religieux avec les directeurs d'écoles et d'observer dans les classes le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage.

Il ressort de l'étude qu'il est urgent de désigner une personne compétente qui serait responsable à temps plein ou à demi-temps du programme d'enseignement moral et religieux. La formation d'enseignants est, en outre, une priorité majeure. L'implantation d'un programme-cadre rigide pour l'enseignement moral et religieux semble toutefois prématurée. Les communautés locales doivent avoir le temps de décider de la direction qu'elles entendent suivre. On recommande que l'enseignement soit donné en Crie et en anglais jusqu'à ce que le programme puisse être donné entièrement en Crie, avec du matériel didactique Crie.

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A REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES OF THE CREE SCHOOL BOARD

Regarding

A STUDY OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Office of Research on Educational Policy
Division of Educational Leadership
Department of Educational Administration
McGill University

April 1980

McGILL UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, OFFICE OF RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

This report is the result of a study of Moral and Religious Education within the Cree School Board conducted by the Office of Research on Educational Policy of McGill University, January - April, 1980.

Contributors to various aspects of the study included the following:

Gary Anderson, Director, Office of Research on Educational Policy, (Planning, Initial visitations, analysis and reporting)

Daisy MacNeill, Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy of Education (Planning, community visits, analysis and reporting)

Geraldine Norton, Office of Research on Educational Policy (Secretarial)

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Janyne Rahming, Research Assistant, Office of Research on Educational Policy (Analysis and Reporting)

Special thanks are extended to Lawrence Jimiken of the Cree School Board who assisted in visitations to the Cree Communities.

FOREWORD

May I begin with a "thank you" to the Cree School Board for the rewarding experience of working in the north. I have come back to Montreal with a happy recollection of great white shining space and silence, of pale blue evenings, of wise people, and children with rosy cheeks and shining eyes. This was my first visit in the north; I am grateful for it.

Under the guidance of Lawrence Jimiken I visited Great Whale River, Fort George, Paint Hills, Eastmain, Rupert's House, Waswanipi and Mistassini. I learned a great deal from the varied experiences in my travels. On one weekend I watched the Beavers take first place in their class in Val d'Or's hockey tournament. Everywhere, I talked with people about what they thought the children should learn in school about religion and about moral values.

Daisy MacNeill

PREFACE

As part of its overall priorities for the development of Cree Curriculum, the Department of Instructional Services of the Cree School Board asked McGill University's Office of Research on Educational Policy to conduct an overall study of moral and religious instruction in the Cree School System. The specific objectives of the study were defined as follows:

1. To determine the nature and extent of existing programs in moral and religious instruction in the various Cree communities.
2. To determine the perceptions of persons within each Cree community on the importance of a program of moral and religious education.
3. To obtain and record community views of the desired content of a program of moral and religious education in the schools.
4. To obtain and record community views of how the moral and religious program should be conducted in the various schools.
5. To make recommendations regarding a plan for the development and implementation of a program of moral and religious education. The plan would include reference to teacher selection and training needs, to program content and curriculum development, and the timing for introduction at various grade levels in the schools.

As might be expected, any study of a topic as vast as moral and religious instruction (MRI) is bound to be lengthy. We have tried to keep the report short and concise. We have also included a summary section which might be sufficient for the casual reader. As well as this report, we have a great amount of documentation including transcripts of interviews and documents we gathered during our work. These could be made available to appropriate persons if that would be helpful. We have very much enjoyed the opportunity to work with the people of the Cree School Board on the study of moral and religious instruction. We share your concern for the instruction Cree children are receiving. We hope this study will be of benefit in your continuing search for educational improvement.

Gary J. Anderson

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INTRODUCTION

In the traditional life style of the James Bay Cree there does not appear to have been a need for a distinct period of instruction for children in religion. The traditional aspects of moral and religious life were everywhere and were naturally integrated into daily living. Basic cultural values were acquired from generation to generation by observation and from example. These values crystallized in family and community life.

The first formal instruction in Christian religion was imported, of course, by missionary groups. Like representatives of organized churches throughout the world, churchmen perceived as necessary to their mission the establishment of churches of their denomination. The initial ministering of the Anglican Church was followed by that of the Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and others. In the most general terms, religious teaching by these groups has emphasized the Bible, Bible stories and catechism much more than more general moral or interpretative aspects of religion. This tradition persists in some of the churches and has had a major influence on current practices in schools.

In 1979, following the provisions of Section 16.0.5 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, a moral and religious instruction (MRI) component was added to the school curriculum at both elementary and secondary levels. Generally speaking, one or more religious leaders from each community were appointed to teach in the schools. In some cases, regular classroom teachers also taught MRI. People were posted, often with little notice or special preparation, and began to teach what they considered to be appropriate. It should be noted as well that in some communities this move was paralleled by a decline in the Sunday school program. Communities now expected the school to replace what the churches had been doing.

As Cree schools begin their MRI program, it may be useful to note the current trend of such instruction elsewhere in Quebec. Its main goal is to make available to children knowledge about religion and about values so that they

can better understand and appreciate their own traditions and those of other people. The hoped-for outcomes include:

- a lively interest in religion defined as ultimate life questions,
- awareness and acceptance both of differences and similarities in other people and other religions,
- awareness of the values involved in daily decisions and a growing ability to think independently about these values.

As persons outside the Cree Culture, those of us who have been involved in the study of MRI have this goal as our frame of reference. There appear to be different values for MRI in the Cree communities and we hope that we have been sensitive to them and that we have portrayed them honestly and accurately. It seems to us important that those responsible for implementing a program in the schools be acutely aware that the philosophy underlying any program shapes its curriculum and selects its teaching methods and materials. These, in turn, either support the cultural norms or challenge and change them.

Do the Cree people want to bring into their schools the independent thinking and open-mindedness that is a goal of the MRI program? Can this, in 1980, be considered as one form of respect for persons and for nature? Or would the Cree people prefer that that schools teach a body of doctrine formerly learned under church auspices?

SUMMARY

This study is concerned with Moral and Religious Instruction within the communities served by the Cree School Board as observed in the winter of 1980. Visits to each community provided an opportunity to observe current practices in classrooms, to discuss the teaching situation with teachers, and to obtain the views of clergy, school committees and other community leaders. The report provides an overall description of the teaching-learning situation, summarizes the views of community representatives on moral and religious education and suggests general directions for future development of this curricular area.

In early 1980, moral and religious instruction was a relatively new area of teaching in Cree schools. It developed out of community concern for the provision of religious education in schools to supplement or replace the traditional role of church Sunday school programs. It was sanctioned by provisions of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement which permitted the School Commission to appoint teachers and schedule instructional time. Many of the moral and religious teachers are Cree elders, often with ties to a particular church. Class sessions are most often conducted in Cree and tend to concentrate on the teaching of religion as viewed by a particular denomination rather than the teaching of general values or moral principles.

Our findings suggest an immediate need to appoint a suitable person with half-time or full-time responsibility for the MRI program. There is an acute need for leadership, particularly in the areas of teacher supervision and training and in curriculum development. While it is easy to make such a suggestion, it is recognized that it will be exceedingly difficult to locate a suitable person who has sufficient knowledge of the Cree language and of religion and who is at the same time acceptable to persons of different communities and religious denominations.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Department of Instructional Services designate someone to be responsible for leadership of the MRI program.

Secondly, teacher training is considered to be a major priority. This should ideally address both general and specific training needs of the teachers currently involved. In general, teachers should be encouraged to enter the existing teacher training program. As well, there needs to be more curriculum-specific training related to MRI. This should be attempted through workshops and through individual supervision of teachers on the job. The latter is considered the best means for sound development of teaching skills in the long term.

> Recommendation 2: MRI teachers should be encouraged to obtain teacher training in the existing teacher training program and through workshops and individual supervision which will address the specific teaching needs of MRI.

A third conclusion of the study is that it is premature to set rigid curriculum frameworks for the MRI program. It will require time for the communities, schools, and teachers to evolve the best approach to MRI over the long term. It would be inappropriate at this time to make any irreversible decisions. These would merely lock the system into a path which would be difficult to change in the future. It is essential for the program to preserve its flexibility to give communities time to decide the direction which they intend to follow.

> Recommendation 3: We recommend that the MRI program develop slowly, making use of available resource materials and individual units to be developed by those involved.

> Recommendation 4: We recommend that MRI teachers be encouraged to investigate current school library holdings in order to determine what materials may be adapted to MRI themes, encouraged to develop indigenous materials for MRI themes, and encouraged to develop resource centres of MRI - related materials.

Finally, the report discusses the issue of language of instruction and concludes with the following recommendation:

> Recommendation 5: We recommend that instruction for MRI continue to be in both Cree and English until such time as Cree speaking personnel and materials in Cree are available to serve program needs. Practice should be consistent with the overall policies of the Cree School Board regarding language of instruction.

Within this spirit of flexibility, the report outlines some short, medium, and long-term steps which can be taken as soon as a person is designated to follow through on the necessary tasks. Suggestions for curriculum resources and means of implementing them are provided.

METHOD OF STUDY

In preparation for the study of moral and religious instruction, meetings were held between Dr. Gary Anderson and senior members of Instructional Services of the Cree School Board, namely, Sam Gilpin and Emmet Nolan in November 1979. At that time it was decided to involve Lawrence Jimiken, who assisted us during our travel to the various communities. Lawrence's role was to make initial contact with the various communities, to act as intermediary with the Cree people, to provide interpretation with Cree speakers and to assess and report on student reactions to the MRI program. Gary Anderson travelled to two communities but most of the community meetings were left to Daisy MacNeill and Lawrence Jimiken. During the month of February they visited all the major Cree communities where they met with school committees, teachers, and members of the clergy. Daisy also had the opportunity to discuss the MRI program with principals and spent time in classrooms observing the teaching-learning process. The information was analyzed by additional researchers experienced with Cree communities and educational services. This report is a summary of that analysis.

A. PRESENT PRACTICES

Observation of the various commu
education is in its early format
any moral education going on in
elsewhere in Quebec. What is be
organized religion. The major m
the underlying respect held for

While five of the communities sh
the remaining two differ both fr
pattern.

a) Elements Common to Several C

In five of the seven communi
Eastmain, Rupert's House, an
MRI course are similar on th

Personnel: The teacher is C
pected in a church.

Language of Instruction: Th

Content: The content of les
teaching (especially the Ten
well as hymns and prayers.
to Bible classes and arises
material.

Materials: The materials u
Cree, The Peep of Day (a Cr
Cree Hymn book. Other mate

OMMUNITY VISITS

munities suggests that moral and religious
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n classrooms as it is taught in schools
being practiced is the teaching of formal
moral and values components relate to
or the elders involved in the MRI program.

share similar organizational elements,
from each other and from the more general

l Cree Communities
unities (Great Whale, Paint Hills,
and Waswanipi) arrangements for the
these points:

s Cree, an elder, a man highly res-

The sessions are usually held in Cree.

lessons includes Bible stories,
Ten Commandments) and Catechism as
. Values education is incidental
ses only in relation to the Bible

s used comprise the New Testament in
Cree devotional by Bishiop Walton) and a
aterials used include sets of Bible

pictures, stencils made from Bible coloring books and the Good News for Modern Man (in English), which seems useful because the pictures hold attention.

b) Unique Elements of the MRI Program in Fort George and Mistassini

The two communities that vary from this pattern are Fort George and Mistassini.

Fort George: In Fort George, teachers of the elementary grades have been asked to teach MRI in their own classes. Most teachers have not been doing so, and some definitely do not want to do it. A MRI workshop lead by Mrs. Deborah Mowry (wife of the Anglican minister) was held on a pedagogical day, the last day of my visit. Mr. & Mrs. Mowry teach grades 10 and 11 respectively, in English. Mrs. Mowry teaches values through the use of Archie Bunker TV programs, and is preparing a unit on great men and women. Rev. Mr. Mowry has urged students to discuss social issues but feels that so far he has created little interest.

Three Cree people, two of whom are catechists, teach grades 7, 8, and 9. All teach in Cree and follow the pattern described for the five communities above.

Mistassini: In Mistassini a Cree teacher and a teacher from the South teach the MRI program in English. They follow a graded curriculum prepared by the Rev. Jim Collins. Curriculum topics cover a variety of areas. In the early grades, these are Actions, Others, Bible, and Things. In grade four, the topic 'Thoughts' is added. This curriculum covers moral questions relevant to the changing interests and concerns of

children. These questions are seen as arising out of concerns over family life, school life, money, growing up, decision making, etc. Additional topics such as Christian denominations and world religions are also included. Plans are underway to include two new topics - the use of alcohol and drugs, and sex education.

At present this "curriculum" is only a set of topics, with no supporting detail, but it seems to be a good set and it could well be incorporated into a larger MRI curriculum in the future. It has the advantage of having been tried out with Cree children in Mistassini.

B. PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE MRI PROGRAM

Problems in setting up a satisfactory* program in MRI would seem to be of two kinds, those linked with social change in the community, and those that rise out of the classroom situation.

a) MRI Problems Linked With Social Change

Lack of clarity about what an MRI course should do: Citizens in the communities asked that a course in moral and religious values be included in the school curriculum. There is, therefore, a felt need for something to replace the ancient transmission of religion and values. Once children learned by watching their parents' skilled hunting, trapping, sewing, and cooking, and by listening to the stories told by fathers and elders, stories that spoke to them of endurance and courage and skill. Latterly, more or less successfully, the

* What is "satisfactory"? One important aspect that is missing in this report is the students' perception of MRI and their feeling about the course. Fortunately, Lawrence Jimiken is reporting on this aspect, and his report will complement this one.

Anglican Church with its services, its catechists and its residential schools performed the work of moral training for children and adults alike. Then came other denominations, Pentecostal, Northern Baptist, and somehow the word "Christian" became identified with "Pentecostal" and people became confused about which is the "right" religion.

Now a new affluence is providing new freedoms: access by car and ski-doo to other communities; hockey tournaments; TV; availability of drugs. Family break-up occurs more often, and, in any case, children often have to choose whether to go to bush camp for long periods with their parents or to stay in school in the community.

Members of school committees and as many residents as possible were asked the following:

1) What do you want the school to teach your children about religion?

2) What values do you want your children to acquire?

The response in each community indicated emphasis on Bible, catechism, prayers, hymns and church-going. The function of MRI, it would seem is to give the children those teachings which the church used to give, since many children no longer go to church. In several communities Sunday school was discontinued when the MRI program began; in Eastmain the minister asked for MRI time before Easter to prepare the children for Confirmation. Ministers are directly involved in teaching in three other communities, Fort George, Paint Hills and Waswanipi. Is this a clear answer to "Why MRI?" Perhaps people want an

MRI program so as to be sure that all children get church teaching. Perhaps there is a kind of hope that this will ensure some kind of stability in an uncertain future. In any case, so far as one could discern, there was no clear conception of exactly what the teaching of Bible and catechism could be expected to achieve.

To the question about values there was very little answer at first; it is, after all, a question that few people, whether from the South or from the North, could answer quickly. Eventually we started a basic list of "Cree values".

Respect for persons:	- elders, family, friends, persons in the community, strangers.
Respect for others:	- beliefs, sharing.
Respect for nature:	- animals, birds, plants, the earth because God made them all.
	- never killing animals for money, only for food.
	- respecting other people's hunting grounds.
	- conservation.

When asked if strength, endurance, skill should be added to this list, people displayed little reaction. Either these are not Cree values, or the people do not recognize the concepts. Would a story about people who showed these qualities elicit a stronger reaction?

Along with these values we compiled a set of problems. Not every community had all of them:

- lack of interest in the church and religion
- lack of respect - growing out of the changes in lifestyle
- vandalism
- misuse of alcohol and drugs - glue sniffing
- young people staying out all night and then falling asleep in school
- quarreling between groups who go to different school buildings
- lack of motivation due to boredom, sense of futility (no jobs)
- uncertainty about the future

These things would presumably be shared by most other Canadian communities, in the South as well as in the North. The major difference in Cree communities is that these are relatively new trends.

There is always assent that it would be good to include teaching in these areas in the MRI program. Bringing up these matters might be adding to the lack of clarity about what an MRI program can be, however.

Unrealistic expectations that may be enhanced by MRI: Are we raising higher yet an unrealistic expectation that the school should be able to create in children a kind of ego strength and moral judgment that usually develops only within strong family relationships? Because of the rapid social change and the new affluence, parents often feel unable to control and guide their children. We must try to avoid leading them to rely on the school to perform moral miracles on students.

Another source of concern has to do with churches in the community. Presumably parents, church, and school each have a particular responsibility for the moral development of children. What is the specific function of each? And just how does an MRI course help to carry out the function that belongs to the school?

Current MRI philosophy says that parents are responsible for their children. Church and school are their servants. The church's realm is personal religion, commitment, sacraments, doctrine and dogma. The school's realm is to provide the basic knowledge which any person needs if he is to be free to choose a religious allegiance within any of the world's great religions - or even to reject, consciously and intelligently, any such allegiance. The school should limit its function to providing organized units of knowledge about religion. Such teaching, then, can be objective. It can inform pupils about sects, denominations, world religions, without in any way implying that a child or his parents ought to belong to any of them or hold any particular set of beliefs.

This philosophy, obviously, has been developed for modern pluralistic societies. This pluralism is only just beginning to be a feature of Cree communities. Four of the communities (Great Whale, Paint Hills, Eastmain, and Fort George) are still almost entirely Anglican; whereas the other three (Fort Rupert, Waswanipi and Mistassini) are already multi-denominational as the Pentecostal churches have challenged the Anglican church to the point where popular belief identifies 'Christian' with Pentecostal and thinks of Anglicanism as a different religion.

Traditional denominational allegiances are breaking down even in Fort George, where the school enrolls Pentecostal students from Fort Rupert who dislike the MRI program because it is 'Anglican, not Christian.' Though the more knowledgeable teachers are careful to teach only the core theology which is common to most Christian denominations, some have little credibility for the Pentecostal students who are aware of their teachers' connection with the Anglican church.

The presence of a Pentecostal missionary in Fort George (whose request to build a church has been quietly refused) and a gradual falling-off in church attendance indicate that Fort George may be in the process of losing its traditional adherence to the Anglican Church alone. In Fort Rupert and Mistassini, missionaries from a northern Ontario evangelical group who run thriving Sunday schools and speak in much the same style as the Pentecostals have already contributed to the development of pluralism in religious adherence. For these communities, at least, there appears to be an increasing need to adopt the MRI philosophy expressed above.

Indeed, the Rev. Johnny Whiskeychan, Minister of the Pentecostal church in Fort Rupert, stated the gist of this philosophy as his view of how MRI should operate in the schools. He said he doesn't really think that instruction in the schools should be religious. It should be moral instruction, coming from the Bible but not putting one set of beliefs over and above another:

> "The problem with the person who teaches what he himself believes is that he teaches only certain parts of the Bible and teaches only those along with his beliefs. Any curriculum or program that is developed should take this principle into account. A person must be objective."

Only two people expressed this view, Johnny Whiskeychan of Fort Rupert and Jim Collins of Mistassini.

Several people, presumably searching for objectivity, said that teachers should "just teach the stories-what's in the Bible," and most people agreed with the Protestant Committee view that schools should teach religious knowledge and that every child's religion must be respected. This assent may have been more a matter of politeness than a conviction or comprehension of the issues involved, however.

Relationship of church and school in the various communities: At this stage of the development of Cree communities, the churches seem to be a potent force for both cohesion and conflict.

They seem to be strengthening community bonds in that every clergyman spoken with was seriously concerned, energetic, determined to carry out his mandate. At Fort George, a new Anglican minister and his wife are both teaching in the high school, and group activities for youth and adults are being planned for next year. In the communities, Anglican catechists are active among the people, visiting the sick, the bereaved and any who need them. In Fort Rupert, the Anglican minister is pouring much effort into Sunday School. He has bought new materials and he and his wife go over the

lesson with native teachers who then teach the classes. He also has a working Bible study group. In Waswanipi a new, young, Anglican clergyman has a vision of what could be and he is buying books for new Bible study groups (so far, at his own expense. Some of these are a number of copies of the Jerusalem Bible at about $12.00 each). He is dedicated and energetic. In Mistassini an extremely effective Anglican minister used to teach in the school and set out a list of topics which they are using as a curriculum. He appears to be an easy-going person who is on good terms with everyone.

Efforts have long been made to train native clergy, and there are native priests in Paint Hills, Eastmain, and Waswanipi. However, promising Cree young men have seldom, if ever, been willing to complete the training in seminaries. Those ordained, therefore, have generally had inadequate knowledge for their work.

The Pentecostals have had strong moral influence in Fort Rupert, Waswanipi, and Mistassini, and word of this has given them esteem in the other communities. Drunkenness has been noticeably reduced and converts energized to live according to Pentecostal standards. Pentecostals seem to enjoy and respect their religion - an attitude shared by their children. The Pentecostal leaders are highly respected Crees. Pentecostals seem to form a cohesive group; at Waswanipi, many of them live on one street.

In two communities, Fort George and Fort Rupert, there are Catholic missions. Both appear to have been more intent

on providing important public services (hospital in Fort George, mission schools in both Fort George and Fort Rupert) than on recruiting converts and their influence would seem supportive of the work of the Anglicans.

The negative aspects of the churches' work seem to be divisiveness and lingering paternalism.

The very strength of conviction in leaders of both Anglican and Pentecostal groups seems to become dysfunctional when it creates division, bitterness, misunderstanding. The Christian mandate to put first the love of God and neighbour becomes divided so that love of God seems to require separation from the neighbour. Then, sadly, genuine dedication eventuates in community rivalry, and energy freely spent reaps frustration and antagonism.

The Anglicans have a further disadvantage; the tradition of domination and paternalism. One has the impression that one non-Cree minister was free of this and had an easy relationship with the Cree people. Sadly, one has the impression that other white clergy have not freed themselves of the traditional role. And how can they? When a man believes whole-heartedly in the hierarchical church and goes out to carry on its work, how can he be totally free and accepting so as to foster growth in unforeseeable directions in a very new experiment in self-determination and participatory democracy? Large institutions do not change their view of their mandate easily or quickly. Three of the white clergy are Anglo-Catholic; the more they are caught up with the beatific vision of the Church Universal,

the harder it must be for them to be totally accepting of the experiment in freedom and political self-realization that is going on around them. It seems to be tragic but humanly understandable, that their very sincerity almost inevitably limits their usefulness. This, of course, is a personal view.*

b) MRI Problems Linked with the Classroom Situation

Practical problems connected with curriculum and the art of teaching are easier to define than those rising out of social change. They may also be easier to tackle.

Lack of curriculum and curriculum materials: To keep children interested and involved week after week, month after month is difficult for the most experienced teacher equipped with the most modern materials. How very much harder it is when one has not even a list of suitable topics to follow!

Materials needed depend, of course, on what is to be taught. They supplement a curriculum. However, a basic list follows:

Resource books for the teacher

Pictures: Biblical
of child life
of other peoples
of nature

Posters

Songs, music - on recordings or tape

"I liked each of these men, and could not decide whether I wanted to weep for them or to shake them. They know that they no longer have control in the communities and are prepared to work hard within a new, unpredictable era. But they can scarcely be a dynamic, creative part of the new society because their first loyalty is to their church." (Report from Daisy MacNeill)

Stories: Biblical
about children
about family life
dilemmas
about heroes and villains
about other peoples

Role plays and dramatizations

Discussions of moral problems:
values clarification materials

Worksheets, activity books:
Biblical
moral

Project suggestions

Visual materials: filmstrips
slides
films (borrowed)

Lack of formal education on the part of MRI teachers: Before commenting on this point, one must pay tribute to the elders who are doing most of the MRI teaching. These fine old men have a quality that no amount of formal education alone could begin to equal. They have the respect of their communities, a love of their subject and of their pupils, and as elders they provide a living illustration of the religion and values they teach. They should be kept in the school system if they wish it. However, if teachers are to help children prepare for life in a complex and unforeseeable future, they need academic knowledge in at least three areas; religion and ethics, psychology, and teaching skills. We elaborate on these three areas below.

Religion and ethics - Teachers need to broaden their knowledge of Bible background, modern theology, world religions, and awareness of current social issues which carry moral implications. Examples of such issues are changing family patterns

and problems, the work ethic, personal integrity.

Psychology - Teachers also need to improve their knowledge of developmental stages in children and adolescents and how these affect the learning process of pupils.

In addition, while no mention was made of sex education, teachers may benefit from knowledge of current programs in sex education which are concerned with providing a framework in which the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of sexual behaviour are explored.

Teaching skills - Teachers also need help to acquire additional teaching skills. We know little about how Cree children learn in the classroom. While we are trying to find out more it seems reasonable that teachers should be given help in lesson planning and classroom management. There are principles and patterns that provide guidance and can be adapted to varying situations. Without some such knowledge a teacher is hard pressed to keep a class of lively children interested and involved day after day.

Cree as a language of instruction: Use of Cree as a language of instruction is essential for smaller children and probably desirable for all. The use of Cree, however, limits the variety of materials which can support the program. At present the only materials available in syllabics are Old and New Testaments, a hymnal, and a devotional booklet. Some new units prepared in syllabics might have been appropriate for MRI but are currently used in other curricula. The MRI teacher has to depend on improvised materials to

supplement what is available in syllabics or use English materials.

Reading and writing skills: In addition to the paucity of materials in syllabics, pupils' literacy skills also affect both the type and amount of work which they can complete as part of the learning activities supporting MRI instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PERSONNEL

a) Leadership

As a new organization, the Cree School Board is faced with myriad problems and situations which long established school boards do not have to face. One of the corollaries of this is that there are never enough people available to do the necessary jobs. In the case of MRI, this problem is compounded by the specialized nature of the subject, the denominational differences which make it difficult for a person from one denomination to lead those from another, and the need for a person fluent in the Cree language. It is clear that if it is left to the present staff resources, the necessary leadership will not be provided unless there is a realignment of priorities. The Cree School Board has a major investment in the MRI program personnel. In order to assist these persons to develop their skills and acquire new knowledge, it is necessary for the Department of Instructional Services to designate someone with specific responsibility for leadership of the MRI program.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Department of Instructional Services designate someone to be responsible for leadership of the MRI program.

Suggested duties of the MRI Responsable:

1. To identify curriculum materials and obtain them for the MRI instructors.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of existing materials used in Cree Schools.
3. To provide leadership in the preparation of instructional units specifically designed for Cree pupils.

4. To organize the translation of materials into Cree.

5. To visit the communities and provide supervision and guidance to the MRI teachers.

6. To organize workshops on specific topics for MRI teachers.

7. To work with the coordinator of Teacher Training to stimulate interest in teacher training and provide specific assistance to the MRI instructors.

8. To identify external leaders in moral and religious education who could be utilized in the communities.

Ideally, the above job description is that of a full-time post. In practice, however, it may be more satisfactory to employ someone who would be given responsibility for both the MRI and the Cree culture programs. Such an arangement would contribute to increasing integration of two complementary programs - both a sound pedagogical measure and a cost-saving one.

The person appointed should not be identified too closely with one or other of the denominations but should have the respect of the Cree people. Such a person should possess appropriate specialized knowledge in the MRI and Cree culture areas but any shortcomings of knowledge could be remedied by use of temporary assistants in specific technical areas such as the identification of curricular materials and workshop management. Ultimately this leadership must be identified within the school system, but it is premature to expect this to happen within the next year or so.

b) Teacher Selection and Training

While the lack of expert knowledge of the content of MRI can

in part be remedied by appropriate curriculum materials, there is no substitute for expertise in teaching. It is essential that the school system recognize the need for training for the MRI teachers. They want and need assistance in pedagogy. They need to know how to plan lessons and organize classroom learning. They should be encouraged, therefore, to enter the existing teacher training program. As well, there should be ample provision for teacher education in the short term. Workshops are one alternative and these should be tried, but with caution. We must not endanger the program by mixing teachers who have different points of view in religion at a time when the program is so young. A workshop should be monitored carefully to see whether such an intervention can be successful. More importantly, we would encourage on-site supervision by the MRI curriculum leader who should travel to communities, teach model lessons, and generally supervise and assist MRI teachers in the classroom.

Recommendation 2: MRI teachers should be encouraged to obtain teacher training in the existing teacher training program and through workshops and individual supervision which will address the specific teaching needs of MRI.

In formal education a teacher needs both academic knowledge and professional skill. A teacher of MRI, ideally should have considerable knowledge of every subject in the curriculum and every aspect of life, for there is no human experience that could not somehow be touched upon in "moral and religious education." The formal knowledge, however, would lie in educational psychology and in the academic study of religion: Bible history and literature, theology, and knowledge of world religions and ethics. Some knowledge of lesson planning and classroom management is also essential. Teacher training and

curriculum content are linked. Ideally it would be preferable to have existing teachers teach only those things that they are comfortable with and feel able to teach.

In the short-term: The major question for this section, is "Who shall teach MRI?"

If one elder teaches MRI throughout the school, it would seem unlikely that he could or would take academic or professional courses. Younger Crees might do so and increasingly we may hope for Cree teachers with adequate academic preparation. Southern white teachers might, or might not, be willing to prepare themselves in the areas of religion and ethics. Might it be possible, for the immediate future, to divide MRI teaching between the elders and other Cree teachers? Or between the elders and all classroom teachers?

A Cree teacher said, "I know how to pray and to preach but I don't know how to teach."

The Rev. Jim Collins of Mistassini made what seems to be an excellent suggestion. He thought that as we begin to have a broadened curriculum, someone should discuss with each of the older men the areas in which he feels competent to teach. Then those sections would remain his responsibility. Someone else could be asked to cover the remaining content, presumably those topics related to the changing life style, the new social and personal issues growing out of community life, and the new affluence with its TV watching, hockey games, and increased contact with Southerners.

If the older men agreed to such a proposal, who would undertake to teach the topics dealing with the new life-style? The simplest solution, organizationally, would be to ask classroom teachers to do it, possibly as a sort of extended program in language arts and social studies. (Such social studies topics as the family, ecology, meanings of holidays and special events, community helpers etc. belong also in MRI because they are all intertwined with moral questions and moral values.) However, many of the classroom teachers are southern and their stay among the Crees is likely to be brief. Could younger Cree parents or Cree teachers become assistants to older men, to take responsibility for the 'modern' aspects of the curriculum? Presumably no one pattern need prevail everywhere. There is no single pattern of organization now; in Mistassini one young Cree and one other teacher do the MRI throughout the school; in Fort George, primary school classroom teachers are being asked to do it; in Paint Hills the Cree minister helps the older man. Such diversity might well continue with each community finding its own most satisfactory pattern.

In the middle range: Younger Cree staff might be encouraged to attend workshops and courses to do with MRI. There they could incorporate into their daily program those sections of the MRI course that the elder wished to hand over.

In the long term: The distant goal is teaching staff for MRI that is aware of religious and social issues and also of the needs and interests of Cree children. If the elders could still be involved, a Cree tradition, this would seem highly desirable.

B. CURRICULUM

In the selection of learning materials and in a program for curriculum development, we urge the Department of Instructional Services not to develop an elaborate master plan at this time. To do so would create more problems than it would solve. Time is required to sort out the important values and social questions which affect the MRI program. For the short term, we suggest that ad hoc solutions are in order. In other words, we feel that use should be made of specific small units of instruction which would fit into a program but which would not necessarily relate to a thematic whole.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the MRI program develop slowly, making use of available resource materials and individual units to be developed by those involved.

Curriculum development is a long process. English language curricula can easily be obtained from many sources and offered to teachers, but a really good curriculum needs to fit the local situation. For that, it needs to be developed by those who are going to use it.

We would suggest a three-part process for the Cree schools:

In the short term:

i) Obtain curriculum units from such sources as:

The Province of Quebec
OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
The Caring Curriculum (from the Eden Laboratory School, St. Louis, Missouri.)
The Church Centres
The list of topics in use at Mistassini

ii) Select from these materials, units* suitable for primary, intermediate and secondary grades.

* Since the experience and interest of the present MRI teachers lie more in religion than in values, perhaps these first units should centre on religion but bring in the ethical implications of the religious material.

iii) Hold a workshop in which these units, together with supporting material, are presented to a few teachers. Ask the teachers to examine the units with a view to removing anything that is not compatible with Cree culture, and adding that which might appeal especially to Cree children.

iv) Ask teachers to try out with their own classes as many of these units as they consider suitable. A report should be made, either at a later workshop, or to some visiting resource person. In any case, a report should be made to the school principal.

v) Hold a follow-up workshop to which the teachers bring and share the work their children have done in these units.

vi) If it seems appropriate, ask each teacher present to prepare a similar unit on some other topic and present it at a follow-up workshop.

Advantages of this plan:

1. It could be implemented soon.

2. It would show teachers the structure of MRI lesson planning.

3. It would show teachers how children can be actively involved in an MRI lesson.

4. Use of these units could illustrate how a teacher of religious knowledge can present material objectively, not espousing any one denominational point of view.

Disadvantages of the plan: There is one great disadvantage - the material would be in English. How many of the present MRI instructors could make use of it? Perhaps the units chosen could be translated before the workshop. But this means using time and money on units which might not prove acceptable to teachers. If a Cree person selected the units, would that be sufficient guarantee of their suitability? In any case, if this approach is taken, the selected units should be translated as early as possible after the workshop.

In the middle range:

i) Hold workshops as often as possible to develop curricular materials. Two sources can be tapped:

   a) Ready-made materials adapted by Cree teachers and others.

   b) Units that teachers themselves have prepared and tried out with their children.

ii) The follow-up workshops should concern themselves with social issues and values as these relate to MRI instruction.

In the long term: In the end, there should be an open-ended curriculum which speaks to the needs and interests of Cree children and which changes as they change.

C. MATERIALS

Recommendation 4: We recommend that MRI teachers be encouraged to investigate current school library holdings in order to determine what materials may be adapted to MRI themes, encouraged to develop indigenous materials for MRI themes, and encouraged to develop resource centres of MRI - related materials.

In the short term: We would suggest that materials such as Bible Pictures and Bible colouring and activity books be purchased and supplied immediately to teachers who need them.

School libraries and resource centres contain material that would be useful for MRI, e.g. Paint Hills has slide-tape material related to MRI topics, Fort George, Paint Hills and Great Whale have library books about Indian life and The Resource Centre in Fort Rupert has small books of Cree legends: When the Sun was Young and Tabajimo: A Teacher's Guide to Cree Culture, which could well be used by Crees

in moral education. The whole matter of the use of Cree folklore in the MRI course is possibly highly debatable and should be discussed by those concerned.

The outdoors should be a rich source of materials for MRI. One aspect of religion is mystery, beauty, wonder; children living in the Cree territories are living in a land of immense space, brilliant light, great storms. Beauty of snow and frost-flower is part of their heritage, consciously or otherwise. Lessons might sometimes take place out of doors, revelling in the changing seasons and feeling oneness with river and bushland.

In the middle range: The search for (and making of) materials should be an ongoing one, concurrent with development of units for a curriculum.

In the long term: Each school should have a resource centre of materials for MRI. Some of these might perhaps overlap with Cree culture. A resource centre for filmstrips, slides, kits and other expensive items might be housed in one of the communities and materials circulated.

D) LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION

It is useful to consider advantages and disadvantages of Cree as a language of instruction as related to MRI.

The advantage is obvious. Cree children could reflect better in their own language than in a second one upon the values and the religious conceptions of their people.

> "In order for a person to cope with Cree society and succeed in Cree terms, he must be stoic. He must be sensitive enough to interpret and give subtle social cues. He must be able to think wholistically (sic) and determine his course of action in terms of previous successful experience." (Tabajimo: A Teacher's Guide to Eastern Cree Folklore, a Cree Way Project, p. 8)

If a child is to learn these subtleties, he needs to do so in his own language.

The use of Cree as language of instruction does create, however, special difficulties. The problems are twofold. First, not all teachers can use Cree as a language of instruction. While this could be remedied over time, it will take many years before teachers can be found who can both speak and read Cree while also possessing advanced knowledge of religion. Second, no materials exist in Cree and no rapid development of materials can be realistically expected in view of the personnel difficulty just noted.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that Instruction for MRI continue to be in both Cree and English until such time as Cree speaking personnel and materials in Cree are available to serve program needs. Practice should be consistent with the overall policies of the Cree School Board regarding language of instruction.

Summary of Problems linked with the Classroom Situation
and Proposed Solutions

Problems	Solutions		
	Short-range	Medium	Long-range
a) Lack of curriculum and Curriculum materials	Teachers' workshops - prepare units - there - at home - voluntary workshops? Take units from prepared Curricula and try them. Find some - miscellaneous for now	Translate units found satisfactory. Organize for use with units.	Evolve a curriculum by means of workshops. - teachers develop and share units Review and change every two-three years. Have a resource centre in each school plus a central one for expensive items.
b) Lack of formal education	Elementary: Elders continue teaching chosen areas. Classroom teachers supplement if they will.	Courses in MRI as in other subject areas for teachers who are willing.	Native staff who have appropriate education in religion and ethics psychology art of teaching
c) Cree as language of instruction	Continue present use of Cree	Increasing use as teachers are trained and units become available.	Should Cree give way to second language by Grade 5 or 6?
d) Lack of reading and writing skills in students	This will improve as work is done in all courses. MRI should provide its share of practice in reading and writing.		

CONCLUSION

The need for a study of MRI as we have interpreted it was for a general global view of the situation as it presently exists. As a result, this report is neither detailed nor definitive. It merely attempts to explore the broad issues and set the stage for a more intensive and long-term analysis, hopefully from inside the system.

We put forward five overall recommendations at this time, as follows:

1. It is recommended that the Department of Instructional Services designate someone to be responsible for leadership of the MRI program.

2. MRI teachers should be encouraged to obtain teacher training in the existing teacher training program and through workshops and individual supervision which will address the specific teaching needs of MRI.

3. We recommend that the MRI program develop slowly, making use of available resource materials and individual units to be developed by those involved.

4. We recommend that MRI teachers be encouraged to investigate current school library holdings in order to determine what materials may be adapted to MRI themes, encouraged to develop indigenous materials for MRI themes, and encouraged to develop resource centres of MRI - related materials.

5. We recommend that Instruction for MRI continue to be in both Cree and English until such time as Cree speaking personnel and materials in Cree are available to serve program needs. Practice should be consistent with the overall policies of the Cree School Board regarding language of instruction.

Finally, we include on the following page a summary of the five major problem areas linked to the classroom context and suggested responses for short-range, medium and long-term action.